

Council Meeting Summary

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Council Members in attendance:

Elaine Brown - Michigan Food and Farming Systems, Jim Byrum - Michigan Agri-Business Association, Jean Chabut - MI Department of Community Health, Janet Cushman - MI Department of Human Services, Giancarlo Guzman - Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health, Mike Hamm - Michigan State University, Mitch Irwin (Chair) - MI Department of Agriculture, Mattie Jordan-Woods - Northside Association of Community Development, Cheryl Kobernik - North Star Organics, Jane Marshall - Food Bank Council of Michigan, JoAnn Merrick - MI Department of Environmental Quality, Justin Rashid - American Spoon Foods, Inc., Dan Reeves - Associated Food Dealers of Michigan, Todd Regis - United Food & Commercial Workers Local 951, Dennis Sykes - MI Department of Labor and Economic Growth, Dennis West - Northern Initiatives, Leland Wheaton - Charlotte High School, and Todd Wickstrom - Heritage Foods USA

Public in Attendance:

Bob Boehm – Michigan Farm Bureau, Keith Creagh – Michigan Department of Agriculture, Kathy Fedder – Michigan Department of Agriculture, Rich Harlow – Michigan Department of Agriculture, Barb Hensinger – Michigan Department of Agriculture, Elizabeth Juras – Michigan Department of Agriculture, Christine Lietzau – Michigan Department of Agriculture, Jeanne Lipe – Michigan Department of Agriculture, Ameer Miller – Allen Neighborhood Center, Marla Moss - Michigan Department of Education, Gordon Wenk – Michigan Department of Agriculture, Marvin Woods – public, Irma Zuckerberg – Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

Director Irwin called the meeting to order at 10am and welcomed the Council Members to the Michigan Food Policy Council. Director Irwin introduced the newest Council Member, Dan Reeves, of the Associated Food Dealers of Michigan and asked all the Council Members and public in attendance to introduce themselves.

MFPC staff member, Kristin Brooks, presented a brief summary of the MFPC's first Public Listening Session, held in Grand Rapids on December 7, 2005. Approximately 50 people attended the session with about 10 people presenting oral comments and several more written comments. Staff summarized the comments and distributed the "Grand Rapids Listening Session Summary" to those present. Council Members who attended the Listening Session (Elaine Brown, Jean Chabut, Todd Regis, Wayne Wood) presented their observations and comments about the session. Council Members then discussed some of the comments received at the Grand Rapids Listening Session, and staff will divide up the public input comments and distribute them to the appropriate task force(s) for consideration.

Council Members also discussed future regional Listening Session opportunities. The Council decided to hold three to four additional regional Listening Sessions likely in the

Upper Peninsula, the Northern Lower Peninsula (possibly at the Small Farms Convention in Grayling in January), Detroit and Kalamazoo. MFPC staff will look to Council Members for assistance in planning and coordinating these sessions. Director Irwin requested that Council Members send their suggestions and comments to MFPC staff to use in planning future Listening Sessions.

Ms. Brooks then reviewed the "Recommendation Approval Process" document that the Council Members received in their packet of meeting documents. The Council Members will receive hard copies of all the proposed recommendations from the Task Forces one week before council meetings. The recommendation documents will include brief explanations and relationship to Executive Order goals. Council Members will discuss the recommendations and make modifications if necessary before voting full approval/immediate action, no approval or back to the Task Forces for more work.

Director Irwin began the recommendation review and approval process. Task Forces A, B, and C each had multiple recommendations for Council consideration. The Task Force chairs took turns presenting each recommendation with discussion and voting. The following summary of the recommendation discussion mainly captures the decisions reached on each recommendation.

Director Irwin, Chairperson for Task Force A: Increasing Food-Related Businesses and Jobs, presented Recommendation A1.

Recommendation A1: Information and Collaboration Opportunities. Pursue information and collaboration opportunities that support agri-food businesses.

- a) DLEG should include agriculture and food-related business information in the "Be Your Own Boss" program and website.
✓ *Approved for Immediate Action by DLEG*
- b) MEDC and MDA should formalize and regularly perform the update process for the Michigan Site Network (MISITENET) directory to include vacant food processing facilities information and photos.
✓ *Approved*
- c) MDA should facilitate the development of an online toolkit of state resources and requirements for agri-food industry businesses (similar to the Cool Cities Resource Toolbox) to help search through the financial assistance, services, and permit/license requirements and incentives available from the State and federal governments.
✓ *Approved*
- d) MDA and DEQ should cross train staff to increase the level of understanding of agri-food industry-specific compliance issues. Create an MDA ombudsperson within DEQ to assist with industry-specific issues.
✓ *Sent back to Task Force A for modification and inclusion of recommendation passed by the Task Force relating to MDA and DEQ cooperation.**

* "DEQ should coordinate discussions with MDA, MEDC, Food Processing Industry representatives, and other stakeholders regarding food-processing wastewater permitting issues. These discussions will open

- e) DLEG should establish a Statewide Regional Skill Alliance (RSA) for the agricultural industry to develop workforce talent and promote entrepreneurial opportunities and innovation. A workgroup should be convened with key stakeholders (community colleges, employer & labor organizations, education and others) to develop the RSA proposal and seek start-up funding.
✓ *Approved for Immediate Action by DLEG. Timeline for completion is mid-June 2006.*

Jane Marshall, Chairperson for Task Force B: Improving Access to Fresh and Healthy Foods, presented Recommendation B1.

Recommendation B1: Direct Markets in Underserved Locations. Increase the number of direct market locations in communities with underserved and low-resource populations.

- a) Support research, at Michigan State University (MSU) and elsewhere, to fill information gaps including:
 - i) Assessment of current and potential economic impact of direct market venues on the state.
 - ii) Identification of communities and neighborhoods where local food/direct market entrepreneurial efforts are needed.DCH should also promote the use of the Nutrition Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT) with an increased emphasis on food security for communities to conduct their own assessments regarding food availability.
✓ *Approved with Modifications (as written reflects the changes)*
- b) MDA should explore the potential of a USDA Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) grant to support work in this area.
✓ *Approved for Immediate Action by MDA*
- c) DCH and other relevant entities should investigate and support innovative locations for direct market initiatives (e.g. farmers' markets at Head Start locations).
✓ *Approved for Immediate Action by DCH*
- d) MDA and DMB should make state fairgrounds available for direct marketing opportunities.
✓ *Approved*
- e) DMB should review existing regulations prohibiting for-profit activities on state properties, and consider amending regulations to allow for direct market activities.
✓ *Approved*
- f) MDA, DCH and OSA should cooperate with MSU to support the nascent Michigan farmers' market association and to ensure dissemination of information.
✓ *Approved*

communication lines between parties and explore opportunities for both economic growth and environmental stewardship of the food processing industry."

Cheryl Kobernik, Chairperson for Task Force C: Promoting Michigan Foods, presented Recommendation C2 and then Elaine Brown, substitute Chairperson, presented Recommendation C1.

Recommendation C2: Select Michigan Program. Support the Select Michigan Program by providing short-term funding and developing long-term plans including identification of stable funding source(s).

- a) The state of Michigan should provide \$250,000 in bridge funding for the Select Michigan program for 2006 to allow time to identify sustainable funding and long-term strategic goals for the program.
✓ Sent back to Task Force C for modification – needs inclusion of more creative financing/public-private partnerships and identification of longer-term, stable funding sources. Also possibly consider asking for more money.

Recommendation C1: Department of Corrections Michigan Food Purchases.

Increase the percentage of Michigan-produced and/or –processed foods purchased by the MI Department of Corrections (MDOC) for its correctional facilities through both MI Department of Management and Budget (DMB) contracts and spot buys.

- a) DMB and MDA should create training and information opportunities for farmers, processors, and suppliers to learn how to navigate the State bid process and receive notification of bid opportunities.
✓ Approved with Modifications (as written reflects the changes)
- b) DMB should specify an increase over current levels of Michigan-produced and/or –processed food purchased for MDOC using the baseline percentages established with information from current contract holders.
 - i) DMB should change MDOC food contracts to require vendors to supply two columns of price quotes: 1) the vendor's best price, and 2) the best price for a comparable Michigan –produced and/or –processed product to facilitate side-by-side comparison of prices.
✓ Approved with instruction to add language about the actual percentage, or how it should be calculated and revised as goals are met.
- c) MDA, in cooperation with commodity groups and growers associations, should:
 - i) Facilitate the development of a voluntary web-based directory of farmers searchable by location. The directory should be updated and consistently maintained and applicable/usable by all who are interested in locating farmers and Michigan farm products.
 - ii) Connect DMB representatives to commodity group leaders meetings to explain the contract and purchasing opportunities; MDA, commodity/growers groups, and processors should work to identify producers/processors willing and able to provide products to State departments.
 - iii) Facilitate and encourage the development of innovative partnerships to increase the purchase and/or processing of Michigan foods by state departments.
✓ Approved with Modifications (as written reflects the changes)
- d) DMB and MDOC should:

- i) Encourage food service directors at each correctional facility to include local farmers, processors and suppliers when taking bids for produce through spot buys.
 - ii) Create and disseminate (via MDA and commodity groups) an information sheet on the spot buy process to help farmers, processors and suppliers learn more about the process.
- ✓ *Approved with Modifications (as written reflects the changes)*

Council Members generally commented that “Recommendation C1: Department of Corrections Michigan Food Purchases” could be more explicit and used as a model to apply to all food purchasing by state agencies.

There was not time to discuss Recommendations A2, B2, B3, and B4 or to have the Task Force D update in the meeting. Council Members discussed how to approach recommendation approval in future meetings since a lot of time was spent on relatively few recommendations and more recommendations will continue to come out of the Task Forces. Council Members seemed to be in agreement that many of the specific action points did not need to be included in the recommendations and that the recommendations themselves could be broader in scope. Staff will take the feedback and re-format the recommendations that were put on the table (to be briefly reviewed in future meetings) and will also format future recommendations differently to reflect the input.

Director Irwin adjourned the meeting after no further public comments were presented.

The next Michigan Food Policy Council meeting is scheduled for **Monday, February 13, 2006 from 1pm – 4pm** at Constitution Hall in Lansing.